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# Charter for the Board of Directors of the National Capital Region Network

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to describe the basic practices that will be used to plan, organize, manage, and evaluate the efforts of the National Capital Region Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) Program with respect to the National Park Service Natural Resource Challenge.

The I&M Program is being implemented at eleven parks within the National Capital Network of the National Park Service. The parks are: Antietam National Battlefield (ANTI); Catocin Mountain Park (CATO); Chesapeake and Ohio National Historical Park (CHOH); George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP); Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (HAFE); Manassas National Battlefield (MANA); Monocacy National Battlefield (MONO); National Capital Parks – East (NACE); Prince William Forest Park (PRWI); Rock Creek Park (ROCR); and Wolf Trap Farm Park (WOTR).

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The major responsibilities of the Board of Directors shall be to:

- Promote accountability and effectiveness for the I&M Program by reviewing progress and quality control for the Network and oversee spending of Network funds.
- Consult with and solicit professional guidance from the Network's I&M Science Advisory Committee (SAC), the Natural Resource Advisory Team (NAT), and other individuals and organizations on the design and implementation of vital signs monitoring related to the Natural Resource Challenge.
- Decide on strategies and procedures to best accomplish the I&M goals.
- Consult on the hiring of personnel with funds provided to the Network through I&M Program funds.

- Seek additional funding to leverage the funds provided through the I&M Program.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors is comprised of:

1. A superintendent or their designee from each I&M park with one superintendent being appointed as Chairperson.
2. The National Capital Network I&M Coordinator, Monitoring Coordinator, and Chief of Natural Resources and Science.
3. Any member deemed appropriate by the Board.

## PROCEDURES

### Board Meetings

The Chairperson and the I&M Coordinator will coordinate and prepare a formal agenda for a minimum of two meetings annually. Any member may call for a special meeting of the Board if they determine a need or may request conference calls to deal with specific issues.

### Alternates and Quorums

Any park superintendent or their designee who cannot attend or otherwise participate in a meeting of the board may assign an alternate from the park. Eight Board members constitute a quorum.

### Decision Making

All decisions will be consistent with the I&M and Natural Resource Challenge requirements and finalized by a majority vote. All decisions will be documented with responsible individuals and deadlines identified, as appropriate. Such decisions will be distributed to all Board members.

## **Monitoring Plan**

A plan that identifies what natural resources will be monitored, where they will be monitored and how they will be monitored shall be prepared by the I&M Coordinator and Monitoring Coordinator in conjunction with the SAC. The plan will be reviewed and approved by the Board before implementation. A final plan will be completed no later than January 2003.

## **Annual Work Plan**

The I&M Coordinator will present a proposed Annual Work Plan to the Board for discussion, modification and approval no later than September 1 of each year. The Annual Work Plan will identify goals to be accomplished, responsible individuals, assigned deadlines, I&M Program budget and funding sources.

## **Annual Report**

The I&M Coordinator will prepare and present an Annual I&M Report to the Board for discussion, modification, and approval. The Annual Report will detail specific accomplishments, issues to be addressed, recommendations, and a cost summary for the program. The Annual Report will be released no later than December 31 of each year.

## **Five-Year Program Review**

At the end of fiscal year 2004, the Board will undertake a comprehensive Program Review. The purpose of this review will be to evaluate accomplishments and products, protocols used for gathering data, data management, fiscal management, and staffing. The Program Review shall provide the principal basis for any significant changes in program direction and any recommendations will be forwarded to the National I&M office.

## **Funding**

Available I&M Program funds will be distributed as directed through the Annual Work Plan. All I&M Program funds must be strictly accounted for using a specific PWE code and disclosed in the Annual Report. Additionally, other funds contributed by parks, other NPS programs and other sources will be carefully tracked and reported.

Staff hired under this program will be supervised and administratively supported through the Natural Resources and Science Program.

## **SUBGROUPS**

The SAC comprised of natural resource managers and scientists, including scientists from outside of the NPS who work in the parks and are familiar with park issues, will be formed to provide technical assistance and advice to the Board. The Board will approve its composition. The I&M Coordinator will chair its meetings and coordinate its efforts. It will be responsible for:

- Identifying existing information sources about park resources.
- Participating in the identification of monitoring objectives and development of the Network Monitoring Plan.
- Assisting in the selection of indicator species, communities, and processes.
- Evaluating initial sampling designs, methods and protocols.
- Reviewing annual data reports and interpretation as well as participating in the preparation of the Annual Work Plan and Annual Report.

The recommendations of the SAC will be presented to the Board for discussion, modification, and approval.

When needed the Board, SAC, I&M Coordinator or Monitoring Coordinator may form groups of specialists to work on a particular task or a particular sub-program area. No such group will be formed without inclusion of a specific "sunset" provision.

## **COORDINATION**

The Board Chairperson will work closely with the I&M Coordinator, Monitoring Coordinator and Chairpersons from the SAC and the NAT to share information on issues needing to be resolved and decisions that have to be made. The I&M Coordinator will be expected to provide regular briefings by

memoranda, electronic mail or telephone conference to the Board.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

The Network's I&M Program may evolve to include other land and resource managers within the greater landscape of the Network. In no case will this be done without approval of the Board and the National Capital Regional Director. Non-NPS participants will not have decision authority granted to the Board.

## **REPORTING**

Minutes of Board and SAC meetings will be circulated by the I&M Coordinator and Monitoring Coordinator to all members. Copies of the Monitoring Plan, Annual Work Plan, and Annual Report will be circulated to all Board members. The I&M Coordinator will be responsible for maintaining the Administrative Record.

## **AMENDMENT**

The Board may make amendments to this Charter at any time. The I&M Coordinator will be provided a 30 day advanced notice of any proposed amendments before they will take effect.

## Approval Signatures

_____ John Howard, Superintendent Antietam and Monocacy National Battlefields	_____ Date
_____ Mel Poole, Superintendent Catoctin Mountain Park	_____ Date
_____ Doug Faris, Superintendent Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park	_____ Date
_____ Audrey Calhoun, Superintendent George Washington Memorial Parkway	_____ Date
_____ Don Campbell, Superintendent Harpers Ferry National Historical Park	_____ Date
_____ Robert Sutton, Superintendent Manassass National Battlefield	_____ Date
_____ John Hale, Superintendent National Capital Parks/East	_____ Date
_____ Robert Hickman, Superintendent Prince William Forest Park	_____ Date
_____ Adrienne Coleman, Superintendent Rock Creek Park	_____ Date
_____ William Crockett, Superintendent Wolf Trap Farm Park	_____ Date

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL INVENTORY AND MONITORING NETWORK**

**Amendment 1.** This amendment recognizes that the Appalachian National Scenic Trail has become a part of the National Capital Network Inventory and Monitoring Network Board of Directors.

Passed by Board of Directors: 9/15/02

**Amendment 2.** This amendment recognizes a change in the name of the National Capital Network identified in the Introduction - second paragraph of the Charter. The name of the network is now formally recognized as the National Capital Region Network.

Passed by Board of Directors: 3/18/03

**Amendment 3.** This amendment recognizes that new due dates have been established for the completion of the National Capital Region Network Monitoring Plan. The Draft Phase 2 Report will be due to the Washington Support Office on 10/31/03. The Draft Phase 3 Report will be due to Washington Support Office on 12/15/04. The final Monitoring Plan will be due 10/1/05. The content of the phases are described in the Memo and its attachment to Regional Directors dated 2 May 2002 from Abigail Miller, Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science /s/ Abigail Miller.

Passed by Board of Directors: 3/18/03

**Amendment 4.** This amendment designates a Point of Contact for the National Capital Region Network Databases as follows:

- I. **NCRN Point of Contact Justification** — The National Park Species database ("NPSpecies") is one of a suite of Service-wide databases developed by the Inventory and Monitoring Program. NPSpecies is designed to document the occurrence of vertebrate and vascular plant species in national park units, and to substantiate these occurrence records by scientifically credible, high-quality references, vouchers, and observations. The master version of NPSpecies is a password-protected, web-based system; this is accompanied by a PC-based version that can be run from an individual computer using Microsoft Access.

The National Park Service, Service-wide Inventory and Monitoring Program has requested that parks designate Points of Contact (POC) for managing NPSpecies data for each park. This agreement establishes the NCRN Data Manager as the POC for all 11 park units within the National Capital Region Network. As of early 2003 network staff are continuing to populate the database and verify information. By the end of FY 2005 it is anticipated that a good first iteration of vascular plant and vertebrate species lists will be completed for most network parks. At this point the lists can reviewed and certified.

- II. **NCRN NPSpecies Point of Contact Responsibilities** — Following is a description of NPSpecies Point of Contact responsibilities.
1. *Manage web-based NPSpecies access.* The POC will acquire login and password codes for all network park staff needing access to NPSpecies via the Internet, and will ensure that the appropriate level of database permissions and control are granted (e.g., read only, read-edit, or read-edit-delete access). The POC will cancel permissions in the event staff employment, duty station, or responsibilities change.
  2. *Provide orientation, training, and technical support to park staff on NPSpecies use.* The POC will instruct NPSpecies users on the overall structure and function of NPSpecies (both web-based and local versions), provide explanations and documentation on its use; and assist with questions users may have on how to query or manipulate NPSpecies data.

3. *Convert legacy data sets into formats compatible with NPSpecies.* The POC will work with park staff to locate data sets containing NPSpecies-related information, and to merge any appropriate portions of these data sets into NPSpecies.
4. *Ensure that voucher data obtained by the Washington Support Office from national data mining efforts is accurately converted to NPSpecies and reviewed.* As the Washington Support Office staff obtains park-specific data from national and regional museums and herbaria, the POC will ensure that these data are accurately converted to NPSpecies and that these data are made available for review by park-based staff.
5. *Ensure any new NPSpecies-related data collected from I&M or park projects are incorporated into NPSpecies.* The POC will work with I&M cooperators and park resource management staff to ensure that NPSpecies is properly updated to reflect any new data collected in the course of park research or management projects.
6. *Ensure that sensitive data are designated as such, and that access to these data is restricted to the appropriate level.* The POC will request that park resource management staff identify those species that may be vulnerable to disturbance if information from NPSpecies on their location or status is made available outside the park unit, or outside the National Park Service. The POC will ensure that these sensitive records are appropriately coded in NPSpecies and that distribution of the data is limited appropriately.
7. *Ensure that species lists are reviewed by appropriate individuals and certified.* The completeness and accuracy of species-list data in NPSpecies will be assessed by qualified reviewers (park staff or other) on a regular basis (DO #11B: Ensuring Quality of Information Disseminated by the National Park Service). The POC will be responsible for ensuring this review and certification process is undertaken and completed.
8. *Ensure that new species vouchers destined for entry into ANCS+ are also entered into NPSpecies.*

Data associated with species vouchers are now compatible between ANCS+ and NPSpecies. The POC will coordinate with parks so that, to the extent possible, voucher data are entered directly into NPSpecies then exported electronically to ANCS+, thus avoiding duplication of data entry.

9. *Ensure that species nomenclature used for park species lists is referenced and accepted by leading authorities, and, to the extent possible, is compatible among network parks.*
10. *Ensure that all sources of NPSpecies records are documented, and that additions, changes or deletions to records are substantiated and performed with the concurrence of park staff.*

Successful NPSpecies development and administration depends on ongoing coordination and good communication between the POC and park staff. A close working relationship between the POC and park resource management and curatorial staff will be emphasized at all times.

- III. **NPSpecies Point of Contact Designation** — By this agreement, the National Capital Region Network, Inventory and Monitoring Program Data Manager is designated as the NPSpecies 'Point of Contact' (POC) on NPSpecies issues and management for each of the 12 park units within NCRN. As POC for each park the NCRN Data Manager will meet the responsibilities listed under Section II of this agreement. A centralized effort at the network level helps ensure high quality control standards and relieves park resource management staff from many of the ongoing tasks related to NPSpecies database management. Database work will be closely coordinated between the NCRN Data Manager and individual park staff and NPSpecies data will be readily accessible and available to park personnel. The NCRN Data Manager will serve in the POC role for each park until such time that park species list development and certification is complete. At this juncture individual parks will have the choice of taking over the role of POC or continuing with designation of the NCRN

Data Manager as the park POC. It is anticipated that most parks within the network will want the NCRN Data Manager to continue as their POC over the long-term. However, some park units with sufficient natural resource staff and expertise may desire to take over the POC role and on-going data base maintenance and quality control once individual park species lists have been developed and certified. In this case a park may request that the POC designation be changed. The NCRN Data Manager will keep track of POC designations for network parks if they change in the future.

Passed by Board of Directors: 3/18/03

